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Teacher recruitment and retention in England



Summary

- 1 Number of teachers
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- 3 Initiatives to encourage teacher recruitment and retention
- 4 Teacher workload
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- 6 Reports on teacher supply and retention

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Summary

Teacher supply

In general, over the past decade [the overall number of teachers in state-funded schools has not kept pace with increasing pupil numbers](#). This means the pupil to teacher ratio (number of pupils per teacher) has increased from 17.1 in November 2010 to 18.0 in November 2022. In addition, the teacher vacancy rate has risen over this period.

Postgraduate teacher training recruitment

Overall, postgraduate teacher recruitment as measured by [the Initial Teacher Training census](#) was below target in academic year 2023/24 (38% below target). This was mainly driven by low recruitment for secondary trainee teachers (50% below target compared to 4% below target for primary trainee teachers).

Across primary and secondary combined, performance against the postgraduate ITT target was 8 percentage points lower than in the previous year, 2022/23.

The postgraduate teacher recruitment target has only been achieved once since 2015/16. This was in 2020/21 when recruitment was 11% above target. Recruitment also remained relatively high in 2021/22 and was only slightly below target (3% below target). The relatively high recruitment in 2020/21 and 2021/22 was likely due to temporary pandemic related factors.

Recruitment for some secondary subjects is consistently much lower than the average, in particular physics (83% below target in 2023/24), design and technology (73% below target), modern foreign languages (67% below target), and computing (64% below target).

Initiatives to encourage recruitment and retention of teachers

There is a suite of financial incentives aimed at encouraging recruitment to initial teacher training, including bursaries and scholarships.

Since financial year 2018-19 the Government has been piloting the use of early-career payments for teachers in certain subjects as a means of boosting retention rates.

Other recent initiatives aimed at encouraging teacher recruitment and retention include professional development opportunities, introducing a

teacher vacancy website, which was rolled out nationally in April 2019, and a targeted student loan reimbursement scheme.

Teacher workload

TALIS is a five-yearly international, large-scale survey of teachers, school leaders and the learning environment in schools, administered by the OECD. [The most recent survey was conducted in 2018](#), and some of its findings included:

- Full-time lower secondary teachers in England reported working, on average, 49.3 hours a week. This was above the OECD average of 41 hours a week. The equivalent figure in England in TALIS 2013 was 48.2 hours a week.
- Full-time primary teachers in England reported working 52.1 hours a week. This was more than in any other participating country except Japan.

53% of primary teachers and 57% of lower-secondary school teachers felt that their workload was unmanageable.

Teacher recruitment and retention strategy

In January 2019, the DfE published a [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#). The strategy's central reform was the introduction of the [Early Career Framework](#), which underpinned an entitlement to “a fully-funded, 2 year package of structured support for all early career teachers” including 5% funded off-timetable time in the second year of teaching. The Framework has been in place nationally since April 2022.

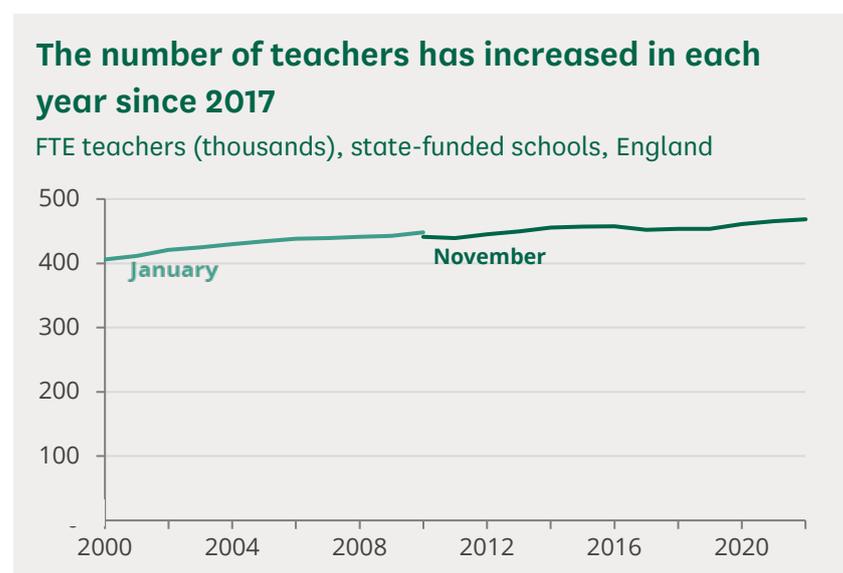
On 20 March 2023 the [Education Committee launched an inquiry into teacher recruitment, training and retention](#). Its scope included the effectiveness of the DfE strategy. The inquiry's report is due in early 2024.

1

Number of teachers

As of November 2022, there were 468,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state-funded schools in England. This is an increase of 6% (or around 27,000 FTE teachers) since the current series began in 2010. This was the highest number of teachers recorded over the period.¹

Data prior to 2010 is not directly comparable with the current series because it was recorded as of January of each year (from 2010 onwards it is as of November of each year). Between January 2000 and 2010 FTE teacher numbers increased by 10% (or around 42,000 FTE teachers).



Source: Department for Education, [School workforce in England](#), various years

The increase in FTE teachers since 2010 has not kept pace with increasing pupil numbers. This means the pupil to teacher ratio² across all state-funded schools (including special schools) has increased from 17.1 in November 2010 to 18.0 in 2022. This is a reduction from a peak of 18.2 recorded in November 2019.³

¹ Department for Education, [School workforce in England: November 2022](#), published 8 June 2023, main text

² The number of pupils reported in the January census divided by the number of teachers reported in the November workforce census. An increase in the pupil to teacher ratio means there are more pupils per teacher

³ As above, [custom table](#), created 10 December 2023

The ratio of pupils to teachers in state-funded special and alternative provision schools is much lower than the average for mainstream schools due to the additional needs of pupils. In 2022 the ratio of pupils to teachers in this sector reached its highest level (6.4) since the current series began in 2010. In 2022 the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream nurseries and primaries was 20.7, and in mainstream secondaries, it was 16.8.⁴

The number of reported teacher vacancies (full-time and part-time) in state-funded schools has also risen steadily since 2010, from 452 (0.1% of the workforce) in November 2010 to 2,334 (0.5% of the workforce) in 2022.⁵

In November 2022, vacancy rates for secondary classroom teachers varied considerably by subject, and were highest in:

- Modern foreign languages other than French, Spanish, and German (4.0%)
- Design and technology – resistant materials (2.0%)
- Design and technology – food technology (1.9%)
- “Other” humanities (1.6%)
- General/combined science (1.5%)
- Maths (1.3)
- Computing (1.3%)
- Music (1.2%)
- ICT (1.2%)
- Other/combined Technology (1.2%).⁶

In absolute terms, the highest number of vacancies were in the following subjects: general/combined science (494) mathematics (430); and English (378).⁷

These vacancy statistics are unlikely to fully reflect recruitment difficulties, in part because they are collected in November when vacancy rates are comparatively low.⁸

⁴ Department for Education, [School workforce in England: Reporting year 2022](#), published 8 June 2023, [custom table](#), created 10 December 2023

⁵ As above, [custom table](#), created 10 December 2023

⁶ As above

⁷ As above

⁸ Education Committee, [Recruitment and retention of teachers](#), February 2017, paras 37-42

2 Recruitment and retention of teachers

2.1 The Teacher Workforce Model

Since academic year 2021/22, the Department for Education has used the Teacher Workforce Model to estimate the number of postgraduate teacher trainees required in England. Targets are published for each subject and phase, taking into account factors such as pupil projections and estimates of teacher flows.

Estimates from the Teacher Workforce Model are used to allocate teacher training places to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers and Schools Direct Lead Schools.⁹

The Teacher Workforce Model replaced the Teacher Supply Model from academic year 2021/22. This means that caution should be taken when comparing targets from previous years, and subject level comparisons are not advised.¹⁰

2.2 ITT Providers

The DfE [commissioned a market review of ITT providers in 2021](#). The full [report published in 2022](#), recommended a new accreditation process and all providers were required to apply for reaccreditation for academic year 2024/25 with new DfE Quality Requirements.

In 2023/24 there were just under 27,000 entrants to ITT at 210 providers.¹¹ The DfE has confirmed accreditation for [179 providers in 2024/25](#).¹² It is unclear whether the decrease in providers will have an impact on recruitment of new teachers, especially in shortage areas.

The next accreditation round is likely to take place during the 2025/26 academic year.

⁹ Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training \(ITT\) allocations and the Teacher Supply Model \(TSM\), England 2020 to 2021 \[PDF\]](#), October 2019

¹⁰ Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training Census: academic year 2021/22](#), 2 December 2021

¹¹ Department for Education, [Initial teacher training census: academic year 2023/24](#), 7 December 2023, main text

¹² Department for Education, [Accredited initial teacher training \(ITT\) providers](#), updated 14 December 2022

The recredited providers will have Ofsted inspections every 3 years as stipulated in the updated [Initial Teacher Education Framework and Handbook](#). This was a recommendation of the ITT market review.

2.3 Changes to ITT allocations process

Since the 2016/17 academic year, there have been changes to the process of allocating training places to ITT providers involving the progressive removal of controls on recruitment for certain providers and subjects.

In the 2023/24 academic year recruitment to ITT was not limited for any subject¹³, meaning that providers could recruit as many trainees as they wish, with no cap.

2.4 Initial teacher training census

The initial teacher training census measures the total number of trainee teachers recruited across the academic year, against the number required under the new Teacher Workforce Model.

Initial teacher training is largely focused on postgraduate courses (normally one year long), which make up the vast majority of training places. The data below refers to postgraduate recruitment only.

2023/24 census

[The most recent census data available is from academic year 2023/24](#). These figures are provisional and subject to change.

Postgraduate teacher recruitment as measured by the ITT census was below target in academic year 2023/24 (38% below target). The target was not reached for primary teachers (4% below target) or for secondary teachers (50% below target).

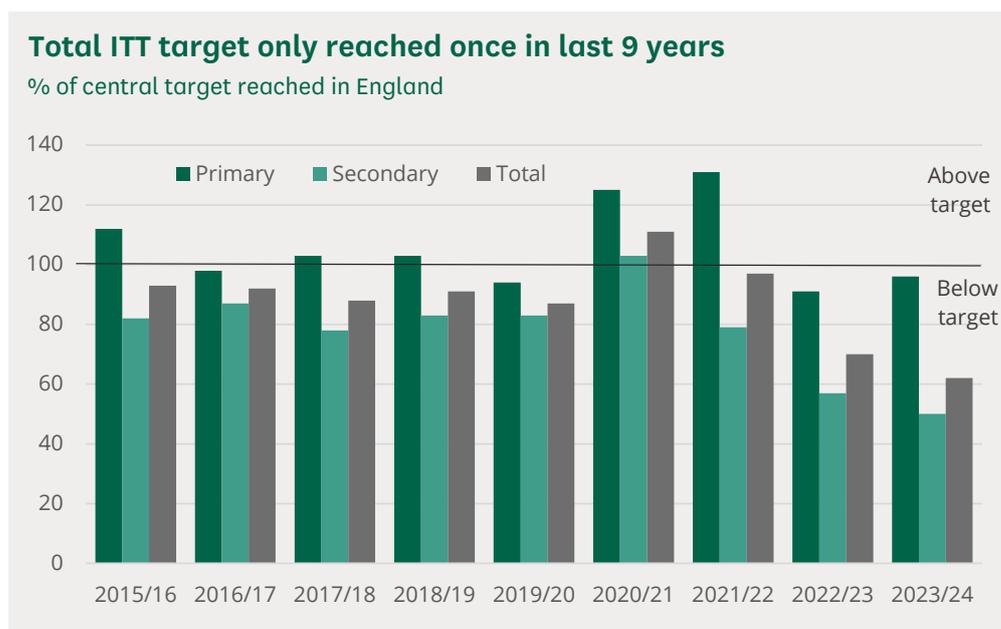
Across both primary and secondary combined, performance against the target declined by 8 percentage points on the previous year. For primary alone, performance against the target improved slightly, it was only 4% below target compared to 7% below target last year. However, secondary performance against the target was worse than the previous year, falling by 7 percentage points.¹⁴

¹³ Department for Education, [Postgraduate initial teacher training targets: academic year 2023/24](#), 27 April 2023

¹⁴ Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training Census](#), 7 December 2023

The postgraduate recruitment target has only been achieved once since 2015/16. This was in 2020/21 when recruitment was 11% above target. Recruitment also remained relatively high in 2021/22 and was only just below target (3% below target).¹⁵ Performance in these years was likely due to pandemic related factors.

The chart below shows that in each year since 2015/16 recruitment for secondary teachers lagged primary. Between 2015/16 and 2021/22, over 90% of the primary ITT target was reached each year and the target was exceeded five times. The secondary teachers target was only reached once (in 2020/21).



Note: Targets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were made using the new Teacher Workforce Model, previous years used the Teacher Supply Model. 2023/24 figures are provisional

Source: Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training Census](#), 7 December 2023, [custom table](#) created 8 December 2023

In academic year 2023/24, the target was reached or exceeded in only three out of 20 secondary subject areas: history (19% above target), physical education (81% above target), and classics (96% above target, although the absolute numbers of classics trainees is small). The target was only narrowly missed in biology (7% below target). The subjects which were the most below target (excluding the ‘other’ subject category) were:

- Business studies (84% below target)
- Physics (83% below target)

¹⁵ Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training Census](#), 7 December 2023, [custom table](#) created 10 December 2023

- Design and technology (73% below target)
- Music (73% below target)
- Modern foreign languages (66% below target).¹⁶

In 2023/24, 44% of postgraduate ITT entrants were recruited by higher education institutions, 24% through the fee-funded Schools Direct route, 3% through the salaried Schools Direct route, 19% entered school-centred ITT (SCITT), 6% through Teach First (known as [high-potential initial teacher training](#)), and 4% through postgraduate teaching apprenticeships.¹⁷

In 2023/24, 22% of recruits had a first class degree, and 51% had a 2:1. The proportion of recruits with a 2:1 degree or higher has remained largely unchanged since 2015/16 (fluctuating between 73-78% over the period). The proportion with a first increased from 18% in 2015/16 to a high of 26% in 2021/22, but since then has declined.¹⁸

The impact of Covid-19

[The National Foundation for Educational Research \(NFER\) has noted](#) that the increase in applications that began in summer 2020 was likely a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic fallout.¹⁹

The Education Policy Institute (EPI) suggest the reason for this is that “the economic contraction during the pandemic made the relative security and stability of teaching more attractive”.²⁰ This impacted both new recruits who might have joined other fields if not for the pandemic, as well as existing teachers who might have been more likely to leave teaching.

However, as EPI warned, this covid-related boost in initial teacher trainees has not been sustained.²¹

In addition to the legacy of the pandemic, there are other factors that could increase pressure on teacher recruitment in the years ahead. These include:

- The introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) performance measure, which could be acting to increase demand for teachers in certain subjects, such as languages. In academic year 2023/24 the recruitment of teachers in EBacc subjects as measured by the ITT census was 45% below target.²²

¹⁶ Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training Census](#), 7 December 2023, [custom table](#), created 8 December 2023

¹⁷ As above, main text

¹⁸ As above, main text

¹⁹ National Foundation for Educational Research, [Teacher training applications up by 42%](#), 8 January 2021

²⁰ Education Policy Institute, [The teaching workforce after the pandemic](#), 14 June 2022

²¹ As above

²² Department for Education, [Initial Teacher Training Census](#), 7 December 2023, main text

- The newly proposed introduction of the Advanced British Standard because it is likely to further increase demand for teachers.²³ More information on the ABS is provided in Commons Library Briefing Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP 9780, [‘Maths to 18’ in England](#).
- The UK’s exit from the EU, and the tightening of immigration rules proposed in October 2023, could potentially make it harder to recruit teachers from the EEA to fill any shortages.

Box 1: Qualified teachers from overseas

Teachers who are fully qualified in the European Economic Area (EEA) and several other countries, can be awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) in England with no requirement for further training. For certain science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) shortage subjects, the range of countries in scope is broader, and includes India, Ghana, Jamaica, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.²⁴

In the 2022-23 financial year, 2,002 QTS awards were made to teachers qualified overseas – a decrease of 48% since 2019-20.²⁵

2.5

Retention of existing teachers

Alongside the recruitment of new teachers, the retention of existing teachers is a key component in maintaining teacher numbers. It is also a major focus of the DfE’s [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) (see section 5 for more details on this).

Around 44,000 full time equivalent (FTE) qualified teachers left the state-funded sector in the 12 months to November 2022, a ‘leavers rate’ of 9.7%. This rate includes those retiring and was up on the previous two years when

²³ Department for Education, [A world-class education system: The Advanced British Standard](#), 4 October 2023. See also Department for Education Hub blog, [The Advanced British Standard: Everything you need to know](#), 5 October 2023

²⁴ Department for Education, [Routes to qualified teacher status \(QTS\) for teachers and those with teaching experience outside the UK](#), 28 September 2023

²⁵ Teaching Regulation Agency, [Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023](#), 16 July 2023; Teaching Regulation Agency, [Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019](#), 5 August 2019

the leaver rate was lower than average. In 2019-20 the rate was 7.3% and in 2020-21 it was 8.1%.²⁶

In the 12 months to November 2022, around 4,000 more FTE teachers entered the profession than left it. In the previous year (2021) it was around 7,800 and in 2020, it was around 9,500 which was the highest number recorded since the series began in November 2010.²⁷

As of November 2022, 13% of newly qualified entrants to the sector were not working in the sector one year after qualifying, and 20% were not working in the sector two years post qualification. The five year out-of-service-rate for 2017 qualifiers was 31%, which is comparable to recent years. The ten year out-of-service rate for 2012 qualifiers was 41%, a slight increase compared to 2011 qualifiers, where the ten-year out-of-service rate was 40%.²⁸

It is important to note that teachers classed as ‘out of the profession’ at any one date may return – these figures summarise flows into and out of the profession, not permanent states.

The [Education Policy Institute summarised the trends](#) in retention in recent years:

The increased rate of teachers quitting the profession is reflected in plunging retention rates this year across all levels of experience. For teachers with over a decade of experience, retention rates are now at the lowest level seen since the data was first published in 2010. A decade after qualification, only 59 per cent of teachers remain in the profession today. Ten years ago, that figure stood at over 65 per cent.

The retention of early-career teachers has also fallen since last year but remains above the record low of 2017, which may indicate that the government’s recruitment and retention strategy is having some success in encouraging new entrants to remain in the sector.²⁹

²⁶ Department for Education, [School workforce in England: Reporting year 2022](#), 7 December 2023, main text

²⁷ As above, “workforce_qual_entrants_2011_2022_national” and “workforce_qual_leavers_2011_2022_national” csv files

²⁸ As above, main text

²⁹ Education Policy Institute, [Six charts that explain the state of the teaching workforce in England](#), 13 June 2023

Box 2: A trio of reports on recruitment and retention in 2023

In 2023, three reports have been published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) exploring flexible working, workload, and leadership and culture as part of their 2023 research theme focusing on teacher recruitment and retention.³⁰ The [first report claims that flexible working approaches](#) could play an important role in improving teacher retention, but according to the report there is little research looking at their broader impact. The review also found that some schools are already implementing various approaches to flexible working, such as offering personal days, part-time posts, and giving teachers the opportunity to complete their lesson planning and marking offsite. But, from 500 state-funded schools in England, only three per cent had a flexible working policy published on their website.

The [second review](#) focussed on how different approaches to managing workload can support recruitment and retention. High workload is the top reason teachers give for leaving the profession, so reducing workload is a priority for improving retention and making teaching more attractive to new entrants. The report states that teachers in schools with more workload reduction strategies in place were much more likely to have positive views of their workload, autonomy and job satisfaction.

A [third review](#), explores the evidence base on school leadership for teacher retention. This review affirms the importance of school leadership in informing teacher retention. It evidences that prioritising teacher development, building an equitable support system, promoting collegiality, and maintaining a positive school climate are effective leadership approaches and strategies to motivate and retain teachers in schools.

2.6

Teachers' pay

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) makes recommendations each year on the pay of teachers in England, in line with a remit set by the Secretary of State.

³⁰ Education Endowment Foundation, [Reports look at flexible working, workload, and leadership and culture](#), 1 November 2023

2023/24 teacher pay award

2022 and 2023 saw a series of school teacher strikes take place across the UK. Unions were calling for better pay and working conditions.

By 31 July 2023, all of the four main school teaching and leadership unions in England announced that their memberships had decided to accept a 6.5% cash-terms increase (with slightly more for some new teachers). This was the [Government's revised pay offer for the 2023/24 academic year, as recommended by the statutory pay body for teachers](#), the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB).

[The Government says](#) the offer “means that teachers and leaders in maintained schools will receive an increase of at least 6.5%” (in cash terms) in the 2023/24 academic year beginning in September.³¹ Individual schools and academy trusts still have some pay flexibility and discretion over pay and pay progression.

Earlier, for the 2022/23 academic year, the [School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document \(STPCD\)](#) uplifted the top and bottom of the main teaching pay bands by around 5% in cash terms. There were higher increases of up to 9% for new teachers, in line with longstanding government commitments to raise starting salaries to £30,000 (outside of London).

The DfE will make additional payments of around £1.4bn to schools to partially cover the 6.5% average pay award, over financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. This is being paid via [the Teachers' Pay Additional Grant](#). There is also a hardship fund of up to £40 million for schools and local authorities facing the biggest financial challenges.

2.7

Department for Education analyses of teacher supply and retention

The 2015 Government began a programme of work to develop the use of existing data to improve understanding of the teacher supply market at a more local level. The programme consisted of:

- A [local analysis of the teacher workforce between 2010 and 2015](#) (September 2016).³²
- Teacher analysis compendium 1: [trends in teacher supply, retention and mobility](#) (May 2017).³³

³¹ [Written Statement to Parliament](#) [HCWS942: Teachers' update], 13 July 2023

³² Department for Education, [Local analysis of teacher workforce: 2010 to 2015](#), September 2016, ps 2-3

³³ As above, p3

- Teacher analysis compendium 2: [school and teacher level factors relating to teacher supply](#) (September 2017).³⁴
- Teacher analysis compendium 3 & 4: [teacher supply, retention and mobility](#) (February 2018 and September 2018).³⁵

³⁴ Department for Education, [Analysis of school and teacher level factors relating to teacher supply](#), September 2017, pp2-4.

³⁵ Department for Education, [Analysis of teacher supply, retention and mobility](#), September 2018, pp2-4.

3 Initiatives to encourage teacher recruitment and retention

This section provides a very brief overview of the bursaries and scholarships available to trainee teachers before providing information on other recent Government initiatives to encourage teacher recruitment and retention.

3.1 Bursaries and scholarships

There various financial incentives aimed at encouraging recruitment to initial teacher training (ITT), including bursaries and scholarships for individuals training in certain subjects. The level of bursary currently varies by subject. Chemistry, Computing, Maths and Physics trainees with a 2:2 degree or above, for example, may be eligible for a bursary of £28,000 in 2024/25; the bursary for a biology trainee with a 2:2 or above is £25,000.³⁶

Bursary levels vary from year to year, and are not always available for the same subjects. For example, the language teaching bursary reduced from £26,000 in 2020/21 to £10,000 in 2021/22, increased to £25,000 in 2023/24, and will remain at that level in 2024/25. Bursaries to teach English were not available in 2020/21 or 2021/22, but were available again in 2023/24 (£15,000) and in 2024/25 (£10,000).³⁷

Some teacher training routes also offer a salary during training (for example, Teach First and School Direct (salaried)). Further information is available on the Get Into Teaching website at: [Bursaries and funding](#).

In October 2023, the Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan announced investment of over £600 million, over the next 2 years, to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers of key shortage subjects in schools and colleges, and strengthen support to those pupils who need to resit GCSE maths or English.³⁸ This package includes £100 million each year to double the [Levelling up Premium](#).³⁹

³⁶ Department for Education, [Funding: Initial teacher training \(ITT\), academic year 2024 to 2025](#), 10 October 2023

³⁷ Department for Education, [Funding: Initial teacher training \(ITT\), academic year 2024 to 2025](#), 10 October 2023, and earlier years

³⁸ Department for Education, [A world-class education system: The Advanced British Standard](#), October 2023

³⁹ As above

Also, all teachers who are in the first five years of their career, teaching shortage subjects and working in disadvantaged schools, will be paid up to [£6,000 per year tax-free](#).

Box 3: Effectiveness of bursaries

There has been debate about the effectiveness of bursaries in ensuring sufficient numbers of teachers.

For example, in its October 2018 report, [Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England](#), the National Foundation for Educational Research stated that bursaries did not appear to be incentivising recruitment or retention to the levels required, which may be because they were not tied to teachers staying in the profession. The report recommended that the Government should structure financial incentives so that they incentivise retention in the first few years after training.⁴⁰ As explained in section 5 below, the DfE’s Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy proposed reforming bursaries to a “phased, retention payment approach”.⁴¹

In October 2018, the DfE published an experimental analysis of the destinations of trainee teachers who are likely to have been awarded a bursary. Among other things, the analysis found:

1. Between 2009-10 and 2015-16, 93% of trainees awarded a bursary successfully gained QTS. The rate for non-bursary holders was 91%, but this could have been a result of differences in qualifications or characteristics of the trainees.⁴²
2. Between 2009-10 and 2015-16, 89% of postgraduate bursary holders awarded QTS were found in a teaching post in a state funded school in England at some point before November 2017. The proportion of bursary holders found in a teaching post in a state-funded school following the award of QTS was lower than the proportion of non-bursary holders in each year.⁴³

In response to a parliamentary question in July 2018 on the effectiveness of bursaries, the then Minister highlighted DfE analysis that showed a statistical correlation between bursaries and the number of teacher

⁴⁰ National Foundation for Educational Research, [Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England: Nurturing, supporting and valuing teachers](#), October 2018, p3. For earlier commentary on the use of bursaries, see: National Audit Office, [Training New Teachers](#), 10 February 2016, HC 798, p11; Public Accounts Committee, [Training new teachers](#), 10 June 2016, HC 73, pp7-8; Institute for Fiscal Studies, [The longer-term costs and benefits of different initial teacher training routes](#), July 2016; Higher Education Policy Institute, [Whither Teacher Education and Training?](#), April 2017, p43

⁴¹ As above, p22

⁴² Department for Education, [Destinations of trainee teachers awarded a bursary](#), October 2018, p5

⁴³ As above, p11

training applications; increasing bursaries by £1,000 was found to lead to a 2.9% increase in applications at that time.⁴⁴

Early-career payments

Since 2018-19, the Government has used targeted one-year early-career payments to incentivise maths, physics, chemistry and languages teachers to stay in the profession. Payments of either £2,000 or £5,000 are calculated by the year ITT is undertaken, and the subject specialism. For teachers who are in an ‘uplift area’, these payments increase from £2,000 to £3,000 and from £5,000 to £7,500.⁴⁵

The early career payments are in addition to any bursaries or scholarships received during ITT.

More information on the various routes into teaching, including the financial incentives they offer, is provided in Commons Library Briefing Paper 6710, [Initial teacher training in England](#).

3.2

Advertising teacher vacancies

In addition to the bursaries outlined above, the Government advertises for new recruits to teacher training. The budget for such advertising has increased in recent years and in 2019-20 the DfE spent around £13 million, a 131% increase since 2015-16.⁴⁶ Two reports on the effectiveness of its marketing campaigns were published by the DfE in January 2019.⁴⁷

Following on from earlier commitments, in April 2019 the DfE launched a [vacancy website for teachers](#).^{48,49}

3.3

Professional development

The shortage of teachers who specialise in maths is a focal point because of the proposal for everybody to study the subject in some form to the age of 18.

⁴⁴ [PQ 161071 \[on Teachers: recruitment\]](#), 10 July 2018

⁴⁵ Department for Education, [Early career payments for teachers](#), 25 September 2023

⁴⁶ [PQ 91895 \[on Teachers: training\]](#), 6 November 2020

⁴⁷ Department for Education, [Teacher training marketing campaign: initial report](#), 3 January 2019; Department for Education, [Teacher training marketing campaign: second report](#), 3 January 2019

⁴⁸ Conservative Party, [Forward, Together: The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2017](#), May 2017, p51; Department for Education, [Educational Excellence Everywhere](#), March 2016, p27; [Damian Hinds: There are no great schools without great teachers](#), Department for Education, 10 March 2018

⁴⁹ [PQ280317 \[on Schools: Vacancies\]](#), 29 July 2019

The Government has sought to increase the retention of maths teachers through enhanced professional development opportunities. The new maths National Professional Qualification (NPQ) from February 2024 will support the professional development of [maths teachers](#), as recommended by the 2017 Smith review.

More information on the maths specialist teacher shortage is provided in Commons Library Briefing Paper 9780, [‘Maths to 18’ in England](#).

3.4 Student loan reimbursement scheme

On 1 October 2017, the Government piloted a student loan reimbursement programme, which has since been rolled out through to 2023.⁵⁰

Eligible teachers completing their ITT between the 2013/14 academic year and the 2020/21 academic year can apply for reimbursements for the 10 academic years after their award of QTS. To be eligible, teachers must, among other things:

- Be employed in a maintained secondary school, a secondary academy or free school, or a maintained or non-maintained special school.
- Be employed at a school in one of participating local authorities.
- Be teaching an eligible subject: languages, physics, chemistry, biology, and computing.⁵¹

3.5 Tailored support programme

In her speech to the Conservative Party conference in October 2017, the then Education Secretary, Justine Greening, announced an investment of £30 million in tailored support for schools that struggle the most with recruitment and retention, including investment in professional development.⁵²

The DfE commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to conduct an evaluation of the Tailored Support Programme (TSP).⁵³ The final report published in March 2021, among other things, highlighted system leader support, mentoring and support for early career teachers. It concluded by noting that although the TSP had range of benefits, “deep

⁵⁰ Department for Education news story, [New education and skills measures announced](#), 1 October 2017

⁵¹ Department for Education, [Teachers: claim back your student loan repayments - eligibility and payment details](#), 25 September 2023

⁵² As above

⁵³ National Foundation for Educational Research, [Evaluation of the Tailored Support Programme \[PDF\]](#), March 2021

rooted” challenges needed to be addressed at national level, which the programme was not able to resolve. These challenges included:

- issues with national teacher supply and quality
- negative perceptions/profile of teaching as a career
- teacher salaries not being competitive and in line with other professions; and the pressures of the job, including workload and accountability (for example, Ofsted inspections)

The report cited senior leaders who noted a range of effective elements of the TSP, characterised as a “catalyst for change”, including opportunities for schools to network to share effective practice and solutions to common challenges.⁵⁴

3.6 Encouraging career changes

The charity [Now Teach](#) was set up in 2016 with the aim of encouraging people who have already had a successful career to retrain as maths, science and modern foreign languages teachers. In January 2018, the Government announced that it would invest £350,000 in Now Teach to help it expand into Hastings, one of the 12 Opportunity Areas.⁵⁵ The website says the programme has supported 800 people with teacher training in 100 schools.⁵⁶

In September 2018, the DfE invited organisations to tender for a contract to “aid the recruitment, transition, training and retention” of career changers. A spokesperson was reported as saying that the new programme “builds on the experience of Now Teach.”⁵⁷ In December 2018, the DfE announced that three organisations, Now Teach, Cognition Education, and the Brilliant Club, would receive £10.7 million to “recruit and support up to 600 teachers over the next two years.”⁵⁸

3.7 International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS)

In June 2022, the Government announced that it would, subject to approval by Parliament, roll out a new qualification, [International qualified teacher](#)

⁵⁴ National Foundation for Educational Research, [Evaluation of the Tailored Support Programme \[PDF\]](#), March 2021, ps 11-12

⁵⁵ Department for Education press release, [Boost to get more top professionals into teaching](#), January 2018

⁵⁶ [Nowteach.org.uk homepage](#), accessed 12 December 2023

⁵⁷ [£13m cash pot to entice ‘career changers’ into the classroom](#), Schools Week, 16 September 2018

⁵⁸ Department for Education news story, [Drive to recruit professionals and PhD graduates into teaching](#), 22 November 2018

[status](#) (iQTS), from 2023.⁵⁹ This followed [a consultation in 2021](#),⁶⁰ and a pilot phase launched in spring 2022.

The new qualification would be recognised as equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), able to be offered to trainees all over the world by accredited English initial teacher training (ITT) providers.

Successful completion of the training will lead to the automatic award of English QTS. Candidates would complete the iQTS training programme without needing to visit the UK.⁶¹

Box 4: Education Select Committee inquiry: Teacher recruitment, training and retention

In the context of schools facing “huge teacher shortages” and the “highest number of vacancies” reported since 2010, on 20 March 2023 [the Education Committee launched an inquiry into teacher recruitment, training and retention](#). Between March and December 2023, in five meetings, written and oral evidence was taken from a wide range of witnesses, and two accountability sessions were held with ministers. The focus was on:

actions the Department has taken to address the challenges in recruitment and retention, including the impact of these financial incentives and the so-called Golden Thread reforms. The Committee will assess specific reforms aimed at retention, including the Early Career Framework, Workload Reduction Toolkit, investment in National Qualifications and provisions to support teacher’s mental health. There is concern that these policies have yet to make a significant difference to retention.

Other topics of interest will be how the problems with teacher recruitment, training and retention compare with other professions and sectors of the economy, and whether anything can be learned from those comparisons.⁶²

The report is due in 2024.

⁵⁹ Department for Education press release, [England opens doors to world’s best teachers](#), 10 June 2022

⁶⁰ Department for Education, [International Qualified Teacher Status \(iQTS\) - government consultation response](#), August 2021

⁶¹ Department for Education, [Introducing international qualified teacher status \(iQTS\)](#), 10 June 2022

⁶² Education Committee press release, [Teacher, recruitment, training and retention](#). 20 March 2023

4 Teacher workload

Recent governments have noted workload as “the most frequently cited reason for teachers wanting to leave the profession” and have stated that it “is too high and must be reduced.”⁶³

This section provides a brief overview of recent actions taken with the aim of reducing teacher workload. Further information is available in a [collection of papers](#) published by the DfE. These include documents setting out Government policy, along with research reports, and guidance and information for schools on reducing teacher workload.

4.1 Workload advisory group

On 4 May 2018, the DfE announced the membership and terms of reference of a new Workload Advisory Group.⁶⁴ The Group’s report, [Making Data Work](#), was published in November 2018.⁶⁵

In July 2019 the then Secretary of State, Damian Hinds, [wrote to local authorities and academy trusts](#) to highlight their role in tackling workload issues, as highlighted in the Workload Advisory Group’s report, by reviewing and reducing data burdens on the schools they support.⁶⁶

4.2 Workload Reduction Toolkit

In July 2018, the Government published a [Workload Reduction Toolkit](#) – a series of online resources, including advice, tools and case studies, for school leaders to help review and reduce workload, and evaluate measures to reduce workload in their schools. Further information is available in [guidance on the toolkit](#) published by the DfE.

According to [Education Development Trust research for the DfE](#) [PDF] published in 2023, the Toolkit had a positive impact on the schools in its

⁶³ [PQ 5287 \[on Teachers: Labour Turnover\]](#), 24 July 2017; Department for Education, [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), January 2019, p8

⁶⁴ Department for Education, [Workload advisory group: terms of reference](#), 4 May 2018

⁶⁵ Teacher Workload Advisory Group, [Making data work](#), 6 November 2018

⁶⁶ Department for education, [Data burdens on schools](#), 17 July 2019

research study. Between 2018 and 2022 unnecessary hours worked were reduced on average by 1.68 per week, at schools included in the DfE study.⁶⁷

Since its publication, the DfE has commissioned the Education Development Trust to refresh the toolkit by developing new approaches to streamline processes that arose in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working with schools, the research highlighted areas where schools reported workload reduction. These were:

- data management, through
 - reducing reporting cycles
 - reducing the amount of data inputting required by teachers
- marking and feedback, through
 - switching to in-class verbal feedback and either reducing or completely eliminating written marking
- curriculum planning, through
 - purchasing plan schemes
 - school leadership taking on the role of planning lessons
- communications, through reducing the number of parents evenings, holding them during school time or moving them online
 - reducing the number of meetings held
 - bringing in policies around communications during the evenings, weekends and school holidays.⁶⁸

4.3

Workload surveys

The Teaching & Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018

TALIS is a five-yearly international, large-scale survey of teachers, school leaders and the learning environment in schools, administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The most recent survey was conducted in 2018, with the [results published](#) in June

⁶⁷ Education Development Trust for the Department for Education, [Workload reduction in schools in England \[PDF\]](#), July 2023, p5

⁶⁸ As above, ps 5-6

2019.⁶⁹ The DfE published a [report](#) focusing on the results for England at the same time.⁷⁰

TALIS 2018 focused on lower-secondary school teachers (key stage 3) and primary school teachers. Its key findings relating to teacher workload included:

- Full-time lower secondary teachers in England reported working, on average, 49.3 hours a week. This was above the OECD average of 41 hours a week. The equivalent figure in England in TALIS 2013 was 48.2 hours a week.
- Full-time primary teachers in England reported working 52.1 hours a week. This was more than in any other participating country except Japan.
- 53% of primary teachers and 57% of lower-secondary school teachers felt that their workload was unmanageable.⁷¹
- The Department for Education has confirmed it will not take part in the 2024 survey due to the “considerable workload burden”.⁷²

Teacher Workload Survey 2019

Following the 2014 Workload Challenge, from 2017 the DfE committed to undertake a survey of teacher workload in English schools in the spring term every two years. The most recent survey was conducted in March 2019, with the [findings published in October 2019](#).⁷³

The most recent survey included the general finding that workload/ working hours had improved between 2016 and 2019. However, most respondents reported that they could not complete their workload within their contracted hours, that they did not have an acceptable workload, and that they did not achieve a good work-life balance.

The report stated however, that the results made clear “that there is more work to do to reduce unnecessary workload for teachers, middle leaders, and school leaders.”⁷⁴

Analyses published by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and the Education Policy Institute (EPI) examined how the findings

⁶⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, [TALIS 2018 Results \(Volume I\)](#), 19 June 2019

⁷⁰ Department for Education, [The teaching and learning international survey \(TALIS\) 2018](#), 19 June 2019

⁷¹ As above, ps6-7

⁷² Schools Week, [DfE pulls out of major TALIS survey to reduce considerable workload burden](#), September 2020

⁷³ Department for Education, [Teacher workload survey 2019](#), October 2019

⁷⁴ Department for Education, [Teacher workload survey 2019: Research brief \[PDF\]](#), October 2019, ps 3-7

from the 2019 survey compared with the wider literature on teachers' working hours, including TALIS 2018:

- National Foundation for Educational Research, [The latest findings from the Teacher Workload Survey 2019](#), 19 June 2019
- Education Policy Institute, [What is happening with teachers' workloads?](#), 22 October 2019

Working lives of teachers and leaders

In spring 2022, the DfE commissioned the first survey into the working lives of teachers and leaders in state schools in England. [In April 2023, the report was published](#). It contained a section about “future plans, including intention to leave”:

A quarter (25%) of teachers and leaders reported that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement. This was higher for teachers and leaders working in secondary settings (28%) and for non-ECT classroom teachers (26%). The most commonly cited reasons for considering leaving were high workload (92%), government initiatives or policy changes (76%), and other pressures relating to pupil outcomes or inspection (69%).⁷⁵

4.4

Workload Taskforce

In July 2023 [the Education Secretary reaffirmed the commitment](#) to reduce unnecessary workload for teachers and school leaders.⁷⁶

The ambition is to reduce teachers' and leaders' working hours by five hours a week within three years.⁷⁷

The taskforce to deliver this ambition is made up of [14 representative](#) from all four teaching unions, as well as teachers, leaders, academics and other sector experts.⁷⁸ The variety of expertise within the group is designed to provide insight from across all parts of the education sector, from on the ground perspectives to those in positions of management and leadership.

The taskforce will build on the work of the three [independent workload review groups](#) and the [teacher workload advisory group](#). It will make recommendations to government, Ofsted, and school and trust leaders by the end of March 2024.

⁷⁵ Department for Education, [Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1](#), April 2023, p160

⁷⁶ Written Statement [HCWS942], [Teachers' Update](#), 13 July 2023

⁷⁷ Department for Education blog post, [How we're reducing teacher workload](#), 18 September 2023

⁷⁸ Department for Education press release, [New Taskforce to tackle teacher workload](#), 18 September 2023

5 Teacher recruitment and retention strategy

5.1 Announcement and publication

The [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) was published on 28 January 2019 and the then Secretary of State made a [written ministerial statement](#) outlining its key elements on the same day.⁷⁹

The strategy's introduction stated that it marked "the start of a conversation with the profession" and represented an "adjustment of focus" by recognising that greater attention must be given to ensuring that teachers stay in the profession.⁸⁰

5.2 Strategic Priorities

The 2019 recruitment and retention strategy contained four priorities, which are summarised here:

Priority 1: create the right climate for leaders to establish supportive school cultures

- reforming the school accountability system to simplify it
- Ofsted focussing on management and leadership for reducing teacher workload

Priority 2: transform support for early career teachers

- the Early Career Framework will underpin a fully-funded, 2-year package of structured support for all early career teachers alongside funded time off-timetable in the second year of teaching and additional support for mentors
- create incentives through phased training bursaries, with staggered retention payments

⁷⁹ Written Statement, [HCWS1278 \[on Teacher recruitment and retention strategy\]](#), 28 January 2019

⁸⁰ Department for Education, [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), January 2019, p6

Priority 3: build a career offer that remains attractive to teachers as their careers and lives develop

- develop specialist qualifications to support non-leadership career pathways for teachers that want to stay and excel in the classroom
- invest new and existing leadership qualifications, particularly in challenging schools
- support headteachers to transform approaches to flexible working in schools

Priority 4: make it easier for great people to become teachers

- launch a new discover teaching initiative, for prospective teachers to experience the classroom
- simplify the process for becoming a teacher

5.3 Implementation

Early Career Framework

From October 2019, the DfE Early Career Framework support package has included:

- funded 5% off-timetable-time in the second year of teaching, in addition to the existing 10% in the first year
- a range of high-quality, freely available curricula and training materials underpinned by the Early Career Framework
- funded training for mentors of early career teachers
- funded time for mentors to support early career teachers

A DfE [policy paper](#) published in March 2021,⁸¹ and then [statutory guidance from September 2023](#) confirmed key changes to induction and support underpinned by the Early Career Framework.⁸²

⁸¹ Department for Education, [Early career framework reforms: overview](#), 1 March 2021

⁸² Department for Education, [Induction for early career teachers \(England\) \[PDF\]](#), April 2023

Professional qualifications for teachers

In July 2019, the DfE announced work on “new, specialist qualifications for experienced teachers that build on the core areas of the Early Career Framework.”⁸³

In October 2020, the DfE published guidance documents on [reformed national professional qualifications available to school teachers](#), with the qualifications available to teachers from September 2021.⁸⁴ Lead training providers for each of the NPQs are listed on the DfE website.⁸⁵

Teacher workload and wellbeing charter

In March 2019, [the DfE announced that a new advisory group had been set up](#) to “look at how teachers and school leaders can be better supported to deal with the pressures of the job.” Noting the teacher recruitment and retention strategy’s ambition to “create a positive, supportive culture in schools”, the announcement stated the group would “look at how to promote better wellbeing for teachers.”⁸⁶

[The then Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, welcomed](#) the recommendations from the advisory group. In May 2021, the DfE published the [Education staff wellbeing charter](#):

The education staff wellbeing charter is a declaration of support for, and a set of commitments, to the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education.

The charter is for education staff in England. This includes temporary and support staff. All state-funded schools and colleges are invited to sign up to the charter as a shared commitment to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing of their staff.⁸⁷

The National Education Union state that:

Teachers in the UK continue to work more intensively and for longer hours than any other profession. There is no better time to act to reduce workload in your workplace.

Stress and exhaustion are not only the products of excessive working hours but also of having too little professional discretion in your workplace.⁸⁸

⁸³ Department for Education press release, [New qualifications to help teachers progress their careers](#), 17 July 2019

⁸⁴ Department for Education, [National professional qualifications frameworks](#), 25 August 2023

⁸⁵ Department for Education, [Apply for a national professional qualification \(NPQ\)](#), updated 3 November 2023

⁸⁶ Department for Education news story, [Support on wellbeing for teachers in schools and colleges](#), 15 March 2019

⁸⁷ Department for Education, [Education staff wellbeing charter](#), updated 13 June 2023

⁸⁸ National Education Union, [Workload and working hours](#), 2023

6 Reports on teacher supply and retention

Below are links to selected reports concerning teacher recruitment and retention that have been published since the start of 2017.

- Teachertapp, Gatsby, SchoolDash, [Teacher Recruitment and Retention in 2023: Teachers views on coping with shortages, job attachment and flexible work](#), June 2023
- Education Policy Institute, [The teaching workforce after the pandemic](#), June 2022
- University of Essex, [Does it pay to be a teacher?](#) [PDF], October 2021
- Education Policy Institute, [Teacher recruitment and retention in the eye of the pandemic](#), June 2021
- RAND Europe, [Understanding Teacher Retention](#), February 2021
- National Foundation for Educational Research, [Teacher Labour Market in England - Annual Report 2020](#), June 2020
- National Foundation for Educational Research, [Retaining Science, Mathematics and Computing teachers](#), November 2019
- National Foundation for Educational Research, [Part-time Teaching and Flexible Working in Secondary Schools](#), June 2019
- Education Policy Institute, [Teacher recruitment, progression and retention in multi-academy trusts](#), June 2019
- National Foundation for Educational Research, [Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England: Nurturing, supporting and valuing teachers](#), October 2018
- Education Policy Institute, [The teacher labour market in England: Shortages, subject expertise and incentives](#), August 2018
- Institute for Fiscal Studies, [The characteristics of and earnings and outcomes for physics teachers](#), March 2018
- Education Datalab (commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation), [What happens when you pay shortage-subject teachers more money? Simulating the effect of early-career salary supplements on teacher supply in England](#), November 2017

- National Audit Office, [Retaining and developing the teaching workforce](#), September 2017
- Education Committee, [Recruitment and Retention of Teachers](#), February 2017

The following webpages also provide links to further analysis of the teacher labour market:

- Education datalab: [Teacher careers](#)
- Education Policy Institute: [Teaching and Leadership: Supply and Quality](#)
- National Foundation for Educational Research, [School workforce](#).

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